AMENDMENTS

In the Claims

The following is a marked-up version of the claims with the language that is underlined ("___") being added and the language that contains strikethrough ("——") being deleted:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for initiating an instant messaging (IM) session, the method comprising:

receiving a rule for handling a received email message, the rule defining first criteria and second criteria, the rule further defining an action to be performed when both the first criteria and the second criteria are satisfied by the ~~receiving~~ received email message, wherein the first criteria specifies that the received email message is from a given Internet domain and the second criteria specifies that the sender of the received email message is currently present at an instant messaging account;

determining whether the received email message is from the given Internet domain;

determining whether the sender of the received email message is currently present at the instant messaging account;

determining whether the sender of the received email message is a contact of a recipient of the received email message; ~~and~~

in response to determining that the received email message is from the given Internet domain and the sender of the received email message is currently present at the instant messaging account and in response to determining that the sender of the received email message is the contact of the recipient of the received email message, automatically launching an instant messaging session with the sender and bypassing spam filtering of the received email message; and

in response to determining that both the first criteria and the second criteria are not met,

executing a spam filter on the received email message, wherein the first criteria specifies that the received email message is from a given Internet domain and the second criteria specifies that the sender of the received email message is currently present at an instant messaging account.

2. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein determining whether a sender of a received email message is currently present at an instant messaging account includes extracting contact information from the email message, the contact information being associated with the sender of the received email message.

3-9. (Canceled)

10. (Currently Amended) A non-transitory computer-readable storage medium that includes a program that when executed by a computer performs at least the following:

receiving a rule for handling a received email message, the rule defining first criteria and second criteria, the rule further defining an action to be performed when both the first criteria and the second criteria are satisfied by the receiving received email message, wherein the first criteria specifies that the received email message is from a given Internet domain and the second criteria specifies that the sender of the received email message is currently present at an instant messaging account;

determining whether the received email message is from the given Internet domain;

determining whether the sender of the received email message is currently present at the instant messaging account;

determining whether the sender of the received email message is a contact of a recipient of the received email message; and

in response to determining that the received email message is from the given Internet domain and the sender of the received email message is currently present at the instant messaging account and in response to determining that the sender of the received email message is the contact of the recipient of the received email message, automatically launching an instant messaging session with the sender and bypassing spam filtering of the received email message; and

in response to determining that both the first criteria and the second criteria are not met, executing a spam filter on the received email message, wherein the first criteria specifies that the received email message is from a given Internet domain and the second criteria specifies that the sender of the received email message is currently present at an instant messaging account.

11. (Currently Amended) The non-transitory computer-readable storage medium of claim 10, the program further extracting contact information from the email message, the contact information being associated with the sender of the received email message.

12-17. (Canceled)

18. (Currently Amended) A system for initiating an instant messaging (IM) session, the system comprising:

a processor; and

memory storage storing program code executed by the processor, the instructions comprising:

means for a first portion of the program code for receiving a rule for handling a received email message, the rule defining first criteria and second criteria, the rule further defining an

action to be performed when both the first criteria and the second criteria are satisfied by the ~~receiving~~ received email message, wherein the first criteria specifies that the received email message is from a given Internet domain and the second criteria specifies that the sender of the received email message is currently present at an instant messaging account;

~~means for~~ a second portion of the program code for determining whether the received email message is from the given Internet domain;

~~means for~~ a third portion of the program code for determining whether the sender of the received email message is currently present at the instant messaging account;

~~means for~~ a fourth portion of the program code for determining whether the sender of the received email message is a contact of a recipient of the received email message; ~~and~~

~~means for~~ a fifth portion of the program code for, in response to determining that the received email message is from the given Internet domain and the sender of the received email message is currently present at the instant messaging account and in response to determining that the sender of the received email message is the contact of the recipient of the received email message, automatically launching an instant messaging session with the sender and bypassing spam filtering of the received email message; and

a sixth portion of the program code, ~~for~~ in response to determining that both the first criteria and the second criteria are not met, executing a spam filter on the received email message, wherein the first criteria specifies that the received email message is from a given Internet domain and the second criteria specifies that the sender of the received email message is currently present at an instant messaging account.

19-25. (Canceled)

26. (Currently Amended) A <u>non-transitory</u> computer-readable storage medium for initiating an instant messaging (IM) session, the computer-readable medium including a program that when executed by a computer performs at least the following:

receiving a rule for handling a received email message, the rule defining first criteria and second criteria, the rule further defining an action to be performed when both the first criteria and the second criteria are satisfied by the ~~receiving~~ <u>received</u> email message, wherein the first criteria specifies that the received email message is from a given Internet domain and the second criteria specifies that the sender of the received email message is currently present at an instant messaging account;

determining whether the received email message is from the given Internet domain;

determining whether the sender of the received email message is currently present at the instant messaging account; ~~and~~

in response to determining that the received email message is from the given Internet domain and the sender of the email message is currently present at the instant messaging account, automatically, without user input, launching an instant messaging session with the sender <u>and bypassing spam filtering of the received email message; and</u>

<u>in response to determining that both the first criteria and the second criteria are not met, executing a spam filter on the received email message, wherein the first criteria specifies that the received email message is from a given Internet domain and the second criteria specifies that the sender of the received email message is currently present at an instant messaging account</u>.

27. (Currently Amended) The <u>non-transitory</u> computer-readable storage medium of claim 26, the program further extracting contact information from the email message, the contact information being associated with a sender of the email message.